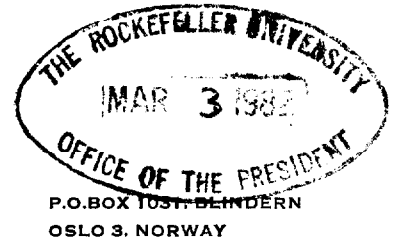


UNIVERSITY OF OSLO



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Feb 26, 1982
Ref PO 135/82

Radiation

Dr J Lederberg
The Rockefeller University
1230 New York Avenue
New York
N Y 10021, USA

Dear Dr Lederberg,

Thanks for your note about the genetic effects of nuclear war. I agree fully to ^{nm} your evaluation of the relative importance of somatic effects.

My concern is founded partly in the situation as expressed in the very first sentence of the clipping you sent: "Genetic damage is one of the most frightening of the potential side effects of the continued pollution of our environment." So, information must be given, as far as we can. Partly I'm concerned with how important genetic effects may become in the chronic phase, after a war, with elevated background radiation and conceivably higher inbreeding in surviving groups. Thirdly, in the context of the WHO engagement, the world wide effects of stray bombs and general fallout may make some of those who today see nuclear war leading to dethronement of the US and USSR as well as Europe, more interested in prevention of nuclear war.

Apart from this, I have no disagreement with you regarding the magnitude of the numbers in the various phases. I'm sure this will also emerge from the full array of position papers commissioned by the WHO. My job remains to look at the genetic aspect.

Thanking you again for your interest, I am,

Yours sincerely,

Per Oftung